

**Calendar No. 566**

107<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**S. 2896**

To enhance the operation of the AMBER Alert communications network in order to facilitate the recovery of abducted children, to provide for enhanced notification on highways of alerts and information on such children, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 3, 2002

Mrs. HUTCHISON (for herself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Mrs. CARNAHAN, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. HELMS, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KYL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. DODD, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. LOTT, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. LUGAR, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. FITZGERALD, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. CLELAND) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

SEPTEMBER 5, 2002

Reported by Mr. LEAHY, with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

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**A BILL**

To enhance the operation of the AMBER Alert communications network in order to facilitate the recovery of abducted children, to provide for enhanced notification on highways of alerts and information on such children, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
 2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “National AMBER  
 5 Alert Network Act of 2002”.

6       **SEC. 2. NATIONAL COORDINATION OF AMBER ALERT COM-**  
 7               **MUNICATIONS NETWORK.**

8       (a) **COORDINATION WITHIN DEPARTMENT OF JUS-**  
 9       **TICE.**—The Attorney General shall assign an officer of the  
 10 Department of Justice to act as the national coordinator  
 11 of the AMBER Alert communications network regarding  
 12 abducted children. The officer so designated shall be  
 13 known as the AMBER Alert Coordinator of the Depart-  
 14 ment of Justice.

15       (b) **DUTIES.**—In acting as the national coordinator  
 16 of the AMBER Alert communications network, the Coor-  
 17 dinator shall—

18               (1) seek to eliminate gaps in the network, in-  
 19 cluding gaps in areas of interstate travel;

20               (2) work with States to encourage the develop-  
 21 ment of additional elements (known as local  
 22 AMBER plans) in the network;

23               (3) work with States to ensure appropriate re-  
 24 gional coordination of various elements of the net-  
 25 work; and

1           (4) act as the nationwide point of contact for—

2                   (A) the development of the network; and

3                   (B) regional coordination of alerts on ab-  
4           ducted children through the network.

5           (c) CONSULTATION WITH FEDERAL BUREAU OF IN-  
6 VESTIGATION.—In carrying out duties under subsection  
7 (b), the Coordinator shall notify and consult with the Di-  
8 rector of the Federal Bureau of Investigation concerning  
9 each child abduction for which an alert is issued through  
10 the AMBER Alert communications network.

11          (d) COOPERATION.—The Coordinator shall cooperate  
12 with the Secretary of Transportation and the Federal  
13 Communications Commission in carrying out activities  
14 under this section.

15 **SEC. 3. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ISSUANCE AND DIS-**  
16 **SEMINATION OF ALERTS THROUGH AMBER**  
17 **ALERT COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.**

18          (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF MINIMUM STANDARDS.—  
19 Subject to subsection (b), the AMBER Alert Coordinator  
20 of the Department of Justice shall establish minimum  
21 standards for—

22               (1) the issuance of alerts through the AMBER  
23 Alert communications network; and

24               (2) the extent of the dissemination of alerts  
25 issued through the network.

1       (b) ~~LIMITATIONS.—(1) The minimum standards es-~~  
2     ~~tablished under subsection (a) shall be adoptable on a vol-~~  
3     ~~untary basis only.~~

4       ~~(2) The minimum standards shall, to the maximum~~  
5     ~~extent practicable (as determined by the Coordinator in~~  
6     ~~consultation with State and local law enforcement agen-~~  
7     ~~cies), provide that the dissemination of an alert through~~  
8     ~~the AMBER Alert communications network be limited to~~  
9     ~~the geographic areas most likely to facilitate the recovery~~  
10    ~~of the abducted child concerned.~~

11      ~~(3) In carrying out activities under subsection (a),~~  
12    ~~the Coordinator may not interfere with the current system~~  
13    ~~of voluntary coordination between local broadcasters and~~  
14    ~~State and local law enforcement agencies for purposes of~~  
15    ~~the AMBER Alert communications network.~~

16      (c) ~~COOPERATION.—(1) The Coordinator shall co-~~  
17    ~~operate with the Secretary of Transportation and the Fed-~~  
18    ~~eral Communications Commission in carrying out activi-~~  
19    ~~ties under this section.~~

20      ~~(2) The Coordinator shall also cooperate with local~~  
21    ~~broadcasters and State and local law enforcement agencies~~  
22    ~~in establishing minimum standards under this section.~~

1 **SEC. 4. GRANT PROGRAM FOR NOTIFICATION AND COMMU-**  
2 **NICATIONS SYSTEMS ALONG HIGHWAYS FOR**  
3 **RECOVERY OF ABDUCTED CHILDREN.**

4 (a) **PROGRAM REQUIRED.**—The Secretary of Trans-  
5 portation shall carry out a program to provide grants to  
6 States for the development or enhancement of notification  
7 or communications systems along highways for alerts and  
8 other information for the recovery of abducted children.

9 (b) **ACTIVITIES.**—Activities funded by grants under  
10 the program under subsection (a) may include—

11 (1) the development or enhancement of elec-  
12 tronic message boards along highways and the place-  
13 ment of additional signage along highways; and

14 (2) the development or enhancement of other  
15 means of disseminating along highways alerts and  
16 other information for the recovery of abducted chil-  
17 dren.

18 (c) **FEDERAL SHARE.**—The Federal share of the cost  
19 of any activities funded by a grant under the program  
20 under subsection (a) may not exceed 50 percent.

21 (d) **DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT AMOUNTS ON GEO-**  
22 **GRAPHIC BASIS.**—The Secretary shall, to the maximum  
23 extent practicable, ensure the distribution of grants under  
24 the program under subsection (a) on an equitable basis  
25 throughout the various regions of the United States.

1       (e) ~~ADMINISTRATION.~~—The Secretary shall prescribe  
 2 requirements, including application requirements, for  
 3 grants under the program under subsection (a).

4       (f) ~~AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.~~—(1)  
 5 There is authorized to be appropriated for the Department  
 6 of Transportation for fiscal year 2003 such sums as may  
 7 be necessary to carry out this section.

8       (2) Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authoriza-  
 9 tion of appropriations in paragraph (1) shall remain avail-  
 10 able until expended.

11 **SEC. 5. GRANT PROGRAM FOR SUPPORT OF AMBER ALERT**  
 12 **COMMUNICATIONS PLANS.**

13       (a) ~~PROGRAM REQUIRED.~~—The Attorney General  
 14 shall carry out a program to provide grants to States for  
 15 the development or enhancement of programs and activi-  
 16 ties for the support of AMBER Alert communications  
 17 plans.

18       (b) ~~ACTIVITIES.~~—Activities funded by grants under  
 19 the program under subsection (a) may include—

20               (1) the development and implementation of edu-  
 21 cation and training programs, and associated mate-  
 22 rials, relating to AMBER Alert communications  
 23 plans;

24               (2) the development and implementation of law  
 25 enforcement programs, and associated equipment;

1 relating to AMBER Alert communications plans;  
 2 and

3 ~~(3) such other activities as the Secretary con-~~  
 4 ~~siders appropriate for supporting the AMBER Alert~~  
 5 ~~communications program.~~

6 ~~(c) FEDERAL SHARE.~~—The Federal share of the cost  
 7 of any activities funded by a grant under the program  
 8 under subsection (a) may not exceed 50 percent.

9 ~~(d) DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT AMOUNTS ON GEO-~~  
 10 ~~GRAPHIC BASIS.~~—The Attorney General shall, to the max-  
 11 imum extent practicable, ensure the distribution of grants  
 12 under the program under subsection (a) on an equitable  
 13 basis throughout the various regions of the United States.

14 ~~(e) ADMINISTRATION.~~—The Attorney General shall  
 15 prescribe requirements, including application require-  
 16 ments, for grants under the program under subsection (a).

17 ~~(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.~~—(1)  
 18 There is authorized to be appropriated for the Department  
 19 of Justice for fiscal year 2003 such sums as may be nec-  
 20 essary to carry out this section.

21 ~~(2) Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authoriza-~~  
 22 ~~tion of appropriations in paragraph (1) shall remain avail-~~  
 23 ~~able until expended.~~

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2       *This Act may be cited as the “National AMBER Alert*  
 3 *Network Act of 2002”.*

4 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL COORDINATION OF AMBER ALERT COM-**  
 5 **MUNICATIONS NETWORK.**

6       (a) *COORDINATION WITHIN DEPARTMENT OF JUS-*  
 7 *TICE.—The Attorney General shall assign an officer of the*  
 8 *Department of Justice to act as the national coordinator*  
 9 *of the AMBER Alert communications network regarding*  
 10 *abducted children. The officer so designated shall be known*  
 11 *as the AMBER Alert Coordinator of the Department of Jus-*  
 12 *tice.*

13       (b) *DUTIES.—In acting as the national coordinator of*  
 14 *the AMBER Alert communications network, the Coordi-*  
 15 *nator shall—*

16               (1) *seek to eliminate gaps in the network, includ-*  
 17 *ing gaps in areas of interstate travel;*

18               (2) *work with States to encourage the develop-*  
 19 *ment of additional elements (known as local AMBER*  
 20 *plans) in the network;*

21               (3) *work with States to ensure appropriate re-*  
 22 *gional coordination of various elements of the net-*  
 23 *work; and*

24               (4) *act as the nationwide point of contact for—*  
 25                       (A) *the development of the network; and*



1                   (B) regional coordination of alerts on ab-  
 2                   ducted children through the network.

3           (c) *CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION.*—(1) In car-  
 4           rying out duties under subsection (b), the Coordinator shall  
 5           notify and consult with the Director of the Federal Bureau  
 6           of Investigation concerning each child abduction for which  
 7           an alert is issued through the AMBER Alert communica-  
 8           tions network.

9           (2) The Coordinator shall cooperate with the Secretary  
 10          of Transportation and the Federal Communications Com-  
 11          mission in carrying out activities under this section.

12          (3) In preparation for carrying out duties under sub-  
 13          section (b), the Coordinator shall consult with the National  
 14          Center for Missing and Exploited Children and other pri-  
 15          vate sector entities and organizations (including non-profit  
 16          organizations) having expertise in matters relating to such  
 17          duties.

18   **SEC. 3. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ISSUANCE AND DISSEMI-**  
 19                                   **NATION OF ALERTS THROUGH AMBER ALERT**  
 20                                   **COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.**

21          (a) *ESTABLISHMENT OF MINIMUM STANDARDS.*—Sub-  
 22          ject to subsection (b), the AMBER Alert Coordinator of the  
 23          Department of Justice shall establish minimum standards  
 24          for—

1           (1) *the issuance of alerts through the AMBER*  
 2     *Alert communications network; and*

3           (2) *the extent of the dissemination of alerts*  
 4     *issued through the network.*

5     (b) *LIMITATIONS.—(1) The minimum standards estab-*  
 6     *lished under subsection (a) shall be adoptable on a vol-*  
 7     *untary basis only.*

8           (2) *The minimum standards shall, to the maximum*  
 9     *extent practicable (as determined by the Coordinator in*  
 10    *consultation with State and local law enforcement agen-*  
 11    *cies), provide that the dissemination of an alert through the*  
 12    *AMBER Alert communications network be limited to the*  
 13    *geographic areas most likely to facilitate the recovery of the*  
 14    *abducted child concerned.*

15          (3) *In carrying out activities under subsection (a), the*  
 16    *Coordinator may not interfere with the current system of*  
 17    *voluntary coordination between local broadcasters and*  
 18    *State and local law enforcement agencies for purposes of*  
 19    *the AMBER Alert communications network.*

20          (c) *COOPERATION AND CONSULTATION.—(1) The Coor-*  
 21    *dinator shall cooperate with the Secretary of Transpor-*  
 22    *tation and the Federal Communications Commission in*  
 23    *carrying out activities under this section.*

1       (2) *The Coordinator shall also cooperate with local*  
 2 *broadcasters and State and local law enforcement agencies*  
 3 *in establishing minimum standards under this section.*

4       (3) *The Coordinator shall also consult with the Na-*  
 5 *tional Center for Missing and Exploited Children and other*  
 6 *private sector entities and organizations (including non-*  
 7 *profit organizations) having an expertise in matters relat-*  
 8 *ing to the minimum standards to be established under this*  
 9 *section in establishing the minimum standards.*

10 **SEC. 4. GRANT PROGRAM FOR NOTIFICATION AND COMMU-**  
 11 **NICATIONS SYSTEMS ALONG HIGHWAYS FOR**  
 12 **RECOVERY OF ABDUCTED CHILDREN.**

13       (a) *PROGRAM REQUIRED.*—*The Secretary of Trans-*  
 14 *portation shall carry out a program to provide grants to*  
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 17 *other information for the recovery of abducted children.*

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 21 *message boards along highways and the placement of*  
 22 *additional signage along highways; and*

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 24 *means of disseminating along highways alerts and*

1        *other information for the recovery of abducted chil-*  
 2        *dren.*

3        (c) *FEDERAL SHARE.*—*The Federal share of the cost*  
 4        *of any activities funded by a grant under the program*  
 5        *under subsection (a) may not exceed 50 percent.*

6        (d) *DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT AMOUNTS ON GEO-*  
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 8        *tent practicable, ensure the distribution of grants under the*  
 9        *program under subsection (a) on an equitable basis*  
 10       *throughout the various regions of the United States.*

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14       (f) *AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.*—(1) *There*  
 15       *is authorized to be appropriated for the Department of*  
 16       *Transportation for fiscal year 2003 such sums as may be*  
 17       *necessary to carry out this section.*

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1 *development or enhancement of programs and activities for*  
 2 *the support of AMBER Alert communications plans.*

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 4 *program under subsection (a) may include—*

5 (1) *the development and implementation of edu-*  
 6 *cation and training programs, and associated mate-*  
 7 *rials, relating to AMBER Alert communications*  
 8 *plans;*

9 (2) *the development and implementation of law*  
 10 *enforcement programs, and associated equipment, re-*  
 11 *lating to AMBER Alert communications plans; and*

12 (3) *such other activities as the Attorney General*  
 13 *considers appropriate for supporting the AMBER*  
 14 *Alert communications program.*

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**A BILL**

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